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SPECIAL POLITICAL AND
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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HUDYMA (Ukraine)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's agenda contained a wide variety of issues and that political will and a readiness to reach compromises would be essential for their consideration.

2. Decolonization could, with full justification, be considered one of the most significant historic achievements of the United Nations. During their deliberations on that issue, delegations would no doubt elaborate on how the goals of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism were being achieved. At the very outset it should be stressed that in any new strategies or policy changes affecting the 18 Territories which remained non-self-governing, paramount importance must be given to the interests and needs of their populations. The general debate would probably reaffirm commitment to the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

3. The signing in 1993 by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Government of Israel of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements had made possible the initiation of a peace process in the Middle East region and there were grounds for hope that that still very fragile and vulnerable process would continue and extend with due respect for the interests and needs of all the parties concerned. He pointed out that Ukraine, which he represented, was a long-standing member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and he hoped that consideration of the issue at the current session of the General Assembly would further facilitate the peace process.

4. The question of United Nations peace-keeping operations in all their aspects remained one of vital importance. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization described the successes and the failures of those operations, which had become more complex, dangerous and expensive. Consideration of that issue in the Committee would undoubtedly bring forward fresh ideas and approaches to the use of peace-keeping operations and reveal ways of making them more efficient.

5. The items allocated to the Committee included, alongside the traditional issues, such new items as 148, "The situation in the occupied territories of Croatia".

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

6. The CHAIRMAN said that consultations on the candidature of his two deputies were still under way and their elections would therefore be deferred to the next meeting.

7. Mr. CHINVANNO (Thailand) nominated Mr. Ndiaye (Gabon) for the office of Rapporteur.

8. Mr. Ndiaye (Gabon) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.4/49/1; A/C.4/49/L.1)

9. The CHAIRMAN stressed the need for strict compliance with rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly relating to congratulations. He then drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of the work of the General Assembly contained in the first report by the General Committee (A/49/250) and considered by the plenary Assembly at its 3rd meeting of the current session. The General Assembly had, inter alia, endorsed the recommendations by the General Committee regarding the recess and the closing date of the forty-ninth session; the schedule of meetings; explanations of vote, right of reply, points of order and length of statements; records of meetings; concluding statements; resolutions; and matters relating to the programme budget.

10. With regard to records of meetings, the General Assembly had approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the practice whereby the former Special Political Committee received full or partial transcripts of certain of its meetings should be maintained. Where summary records were concerned, in the past the Committee had experienced delays in their distribution owing to the requirement for simultaneous distribution in all languages.

11. Consequently, he proposed that summary records of the Committee's meetings should be distributed as soon as they were ready in the language in which they had been drafted, on the understanding that the other language versions would be distributed as they became available.

12. It was so decided.

13. The Committee members were strongly urged to abide by the decisions adopted by the General Assembly on the recommendations contained in the report of the General Committee and to submit draft resolutions promptly, to ensure that there was sufficient time for the required consideration of their programme budget implications. In particular, delegations intending to submit draft resolutions on items towards the end of the Committee's agenda should do so as early as possible. Committee members' attention was also drawn to a note by the Secretary-General on control and limitation of documentation, which would shortly be published in document A/INF/49/1. All delegations were requested to limit, as far as possible, requests for additional documentation, as well as for duplicate copies of material already distributed. Delegations submitting draft resolutions should bear in mind that, owing to financial constraints, overnight processing of documents was not always possible and should be avoided.

14. Committee members' attention was drawn to documents A/C.4/49/1, listing the items allocated to the Committee, and A/C.4/49/L.1, containing the timetable for their consideration. As indicated in the second document, 33 meetings had been allocated to the Committee, with the possibility of a further 2, subject to the

availability of conference services. That allocation had been made on the basis of the number of meetings required for the Committee's agenda in previous years. The Committee's agenda for the current session included three new items, which it would have to consider within the prescribed time-frame. In drawing up the Committee's programme, he had consulted the substantive units of the Secretariat and the delegations concerned and had been guided by the documentation already available and by the projected dates for the issue of other basic reports.

15. The first items to be considered would be 18, 82, 83, 84 and 12, and 85, all relating to decolonization, and the relevant reports had already been issued.

16. With regard to the remaining items, the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, under item 75, was due to appear that same day in document A/49/46. A draft resolution on the item had been prepared and interested delegations should approach the delegation of Peru.

17. The Secretary-General's report on item 74, "Protection and security of small States", would be issued in mid-October in document A/49/353.

18. With regard to items 85, "Science and peace", and 86, "Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations", no basic documentation was expected. Nor was a report expected on item 148, "The situation in the occupied territories of Croatia", but he would report on the communications relating to that item at a later date.

19. With regard to item 80, "Questions relating to information", the report of the Committee on Information had already been issued as document A/49/21, and the corresponding report of the Secretary-General would be issued in document A/49/389.

20. With regard to item 77, "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East", the Commissioner-General's report would be issued in document A/49/13 and the related reports of the Secretary-General would appear by mid-October.

21. With regard to item 76, "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be issued in document A/49/20 and the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/280. With reference to item 147, "Question of the review of the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies", the Committee would have before it document A/49/141.

22. With regard to item 79, "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects", the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had already appeared in document A/49/136 and the corresponding report of the Secretary-General would be issued shortly.

23. With regard to item 78, "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories", two of the Committee's periodic reports

prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 48/41 had already been issued (A/49/67 and A/49/172) and the remaining reports were due to appear by mid-November.

24. Mr. BATAINEH (Jordan), Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) and Mr. AL-HASSAN (Oman), stressing their keen interest in the consideration of agenda item 77 and underlining the importance of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suggested that consideration of the item should be deferred to a later date and taken up after the Committee had concluded its discussion of item 76, on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

25. The CHAIRMAN, assuring the Committee that the suggestion by the representatives of Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Oman would be taken into consideration and that a decision on the matter would be taken once appropriate consultations had been held, said he believed that the Committee was ready to adopt in principle the proposals contained in document A/C.4/49/L.1 on the understanding that the necessary amendments would subsequently be made to them.

26. It was so decided.

27. The CHAIRMAN noted that bodies and individuals having an interest in the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (item 45) would be heard in the Fourth Committee in conjunction with the consideration of the item in plenary meeting. If any requests for a hearing were received, the Committee would be informed of them.

28. With regard to item 77 he suggested that, as in previous years, an open-ended working group should be set up under the chairmanship of the Austrian delegation to prepare a draft resolution on that item.

29. It was so decided.

30. In adopting the proposals on the organization of work, the Committee had decided to hold a general debate on items 18, 82, 83, 84 and 12, and 85, which would allow its members to speak on all those items or any one of them at any meeting dealing with that cluster of items.

31. At previous sessions, the Fourth Committee, on a recommendation from the Special Committee on decolonization, had usually considered the chapter of that Committee's report dealing with military activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories together with the item concerning foreign economic interests. He took it that the Committee wished to retain that procedure.

32. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items)

AGENDA ITEM 81: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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33. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, introduced the chapters of the report of the Special Committee relating to agenda items 18, 81, 82 and 83 contained in document A/49/23 (Parts II to VII).

34. In response to the General Assembly's request in resolution 48/52, paragraph 10, the Special Committee had again given extensive consideration to the situation prevailing in the Non-Self-Governing Territories as well as to other related questions and had adopted a series of recommendations and proposals on that issue.

35. The Special Committee had reiterated that it was the responsibility of the administering Powers to create such conditions in those Territories as would enable their people to exercise freely and without interference their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Special Committee had reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of those Territories themselves to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration, and in that connection it had called upon the administering Powers, in cooperation with the territorial Governments, to facilitate programmes of political education in the Territories in order to foster an awareness among the people of the possibilities open to them in the exercise of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options clearly defined in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV).

36. In reaffirming that it was the responsibility of the administering Powers to promote the economic and social development and preserve the cultural identity of those Territories, the Special Committee had recommended that priority should continue to be given to the strengthening and diversification of their respective economies.

37. Mindful that the United Nations visiting missions provided a means of ascertaining the situation in the Territories, the Special Committee had stressed the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions and had urged the

administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the Special Committee by facilitating the dispatch of visiting missions to the Territories under their administration.

38. During the current year the Special Committee, at the invitation of the Government of New Zealand and of the General Fono (Council) of Tokelau, had dispatched a visiting mission to Tokelau, a report of which was contained in document A/AC.109/2009, and the related recommendations of the Special Committee were contained in document A/49/23 (Part VII), chapter X.

39. With regard to the question of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Special Committee had decided to defer consideration of the question until its 1995 session.

40. As indicated in the relevant chapters, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, as administering Powers, had not participated in the Committee's proceedings in respect of the Territories under their administration during the current year. The Special Committee hoped that the three Governments would reconsider their position.

41. With respect to information transmitted in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter, the Special Committee, in stressing the importance of timely transmission by the administering Powers of adequate information, in particular in relation to the preparation by the Secretariat of working papers on the Territories concerned, had requested the administering Powers concerned to transmit or continue to transmit to the Secretary-General the information prescribed in Article 73 e of the Charter, as well as the fullest possible information on political and constitutional developments in the Territories concerned within a maximum period of six months following the expiration of the administrative year in those Territories. Accordingly, the Special Committee had requested the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that adequate information was drawn from all available published sources in connection with the preparation of those working papers.

42. The chapters of the Special Committee's report covering its work during 1994 and concerning agenda items 82 and 83 were contained in document A/49/23 (Parts III and IV), chapters IV to VI.

43. In accordance with established practice and pursuant to General Assembly decision 48/421, paragraph 7, the Special Committee had considered the question relating to military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration and its recommendation to the General Assembly was contained in document A/49/23 (Part III), chapter V.

44. As indicated in the relevant chapters, the Special Committee had considered those items in July and September 1994 and had adopted the relevant decisions on them. Those decisions had formed the basis for its recommendations to the General Assembly, which were contained in the relevant chapters.

45. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should take note of the Special Committee's recommendation on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands contained in document A/49/23 (Part VI), chapter IX, paragraph 32.

46. It was so decided.

47. Mr. REMIREZ de ESTENOZ BARCIELA (Cuba), speaking as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, described the background to the Special Committee's preparation of its recommendations to the Fourth Committee. The mandate entrusted to the Special Committee on decolonization since its establishment in 1961 had been clear: monitoring the political, economic and social conditions of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and reporting to the General Assembly on the progress achieved in the implementation of its historic resolution 1514 (XV). The Committee had carried out its mandate faithfully. The results of United Nations activity in that field had been extremely successful.

48. Despite the paralysing effect produced by many years of East-West confrontation and the lack of cooperation of some administering Powers in the 1960s and early 1970s, the Special Committee had played an important role in United Nations activities designed to promote the exercise by the peoples of colonial Territories of their fundamental right to self-determination and independence. The present membership of the United Nations, numbering some 60 colonial Territories, was clear testimony to the achievement of the Special Committee. While remaining faithful to its mandate, the Committee had constantly reviewed its approach and method of work in order to adjust to changing circumstances and improve its efficiency.

49. Times had changed since the Special Committee on decolonization had begun its work in 1962. Bearing in mind a number of observations expressed by several delegations in the General Assembly, the Special Committee in recent years has taken a number of initiatives which were reflected in its recommendations to the Fourth Committee. The Committee had continued to review its methods of work in the search for greater efficiency and rationalization. While keeping in mind the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the Special Committee continued to emphasize the specific needs of the Territories and the welfare of their inhabitants.

50. As to the remaining Territories still under colonial administration, the General Assembly had set the goal of complete decolonization by the year 2000 and had declared the period 1990-2000 the "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism". The Special Committee was aware that achieving that goal would require innovative and realistic solutions. The objective of the Decade would be realized only through concrete actions responding to the wishes of the peoples of those Territories regarding their future status. Cooperation and participation by the administering Powers in the work of the Special Committee would also facilitate the attainment of that objective. That was why the Committee had in recent years concentrated its efforts on a new approach to decolonization issues, while adhering firmly to the related principles of the Charter and resolutions of the General Assembly. The

Committee had paid particular attention to the specific needs of each of those Territories, using all available sources of information, the most authoritative being the views of the territorial Governments and peoples concerned. The Committee had systematically encouraged participation by their representatives in its work.

51. Several leaders of territorial Governments attending the regional seminars of the Special Committee had indicated that an acceleration of economic and social development in their Territories would facilitate the exercise of their right to self-determination and independence. The Special Committee had systematically concentrated its efforts on the search for specific measures that would promote the development of those Territories. To that end, it had continued to seek the cooperation of the administering Powers and the assistance of the United Nations specialized agencies.

52. In the current year, he had once again stressed to the administering Powers the importance that the Committee attached to their cooperation and participation in its work. In the Special Committee's view, the visiting missions sent by the United Nations to the Territories were the best means of obtaining first-hand information on the conditions and problems confronting the people. The administering Powers' participation and cooperation in the work of the Committee facilitated the Fourth Committee's consideration for those questions, and the Special Committee urged them to be more forthcoming in that endeavour.

53. In the current year, at the invitation of New Zealand as the administering Power, the Special Committee had dispatched the fourth visiting mission to Tokelau. The visit had enabled the Committee to obtain first-hand information on the conditions in the Territory and to hear the views and wishes of its people on their future status. That information would contribute significantly to the decolonization of the Territory. On behalf of the Special Committee, he thanked the Government of New Zealand for its continued cooperation and expressed the hope that the other administering Powers would come forward with similar invitations to visit Territories under their administration.

54. The Special Committee had always sought to adjust to changing circumstances, and in the continuing process of decolonization it would need to make further adjustments in its work, bearing in mind successes already achieved. He gave assurance, as the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, of his full cooperation in the work of the Fourth Committee and had no doubt that it would be a complete success.

55. Mr. ARDHAOUI (Tunisia), speaking as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, said that, during the current year, the Subcommittee had held a three-month session, culminating in a draft resolution which would be submitted in due course. At that session, the Subcommittee had considered the situation in the following 12 Non-Self-Governing Territories: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands, Pitcairn and St. Helena. The Subcommittee had made an in-depth

study of the political, economic and social situation in each of those Territories.

56. In its work the Subcommittee had drawn on documents submitted by the Secretariat, statements by representatives of the administering Power taking part in the discussions, and also statements by representatives of the Governments of the Territories, particularly Guam and Tokelau. In addition, the Subcommittee had based itself on the guiding principles embodied in the relevant General Assembly resolutions and in the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Subcommittee had also considered the principles laid down by the United Nations according to which the question of territorial size, geographical isolation, small population and limited resources should in no way prevent the population of those Territories from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination.

57. It should be recalled that the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories must be free to determine their own future political status, in conformity with the United Nations Charter, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Referendums and other forms of popular consultation were the appropriate means of ascertaining the wishes of the population of the Territories. That task - ascertaining the wishes of the population - could be achieved only through effective participation and cooperation by the administering Powers. The Subcommittee had always sought to cooperate with a view to developing a tripartite dialogue between the Subcommittee, the administering Powers and the representatives of the population of the Territories in question.

58. The Subcommittee wanted comprehensive cooperation with the administering Powers, in order to ascertain their point of view, the questions which concerned them and how they viewed the future self-determination of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. United Nations visiting missions aimed at a first-hand assessment of the situation were an appropriate means to that end. A good example in that regard was the recently concluded visiting mission to Tokelau. In the course of the mission, numerous contacts and meetings had taken place with the local authorities, representatives of the population and organs of the administering Power. The mission had reached the conclusion that the desire of the population of Tokelau, supported by the New Zealand Government, was to achieve the status of free association. Other administering Powers were urged to resume their cooperation with the Special Committee and its Subcommittee.

59. There were also other questions that preoccupied the Subcommittee. First, the United Nations should take steps to expand the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee and its Subcommittee, including payment of their travel expenses. Secondly, given that several Non-Self-Governing Territories were already participating in regional and international organizations, the remaining Territories should be encouraged to participate in international life. Thirdly, the United Nations and its specialized agencies must redouble their efforts aimed at the development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which had scanty resources and were subject to natural disasters. The remaining recommendations

of the Subcommittee concerned information on decolonization issues. On that question, he had met representatives of the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs. As a result of the meetings, he had put forward recommendations that the international community should be mobilized in support of the objectives of decolonization and also that informational activities should be organized among the Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves through information centres operating in the relevant geographical regions, and also through interparliamentary and non-governmental organizations, through the mass media, by organizing conferences, and so on.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

60. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that 20 communications containing requests for hearings had been received concerning Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia and Western Sahara under agenda item 18 and suggested that they should be distributed as Committee documents.

61. It was so decided.

ALLOCATION OF AGENDA ITEMS TO THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE (FOURTH COMMITTEE)

62. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A/C.4/49/2, containing a letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee concerning proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. He suggested that any members wishing to submit their views on programmes 8 (Peaceful uses of outer space) and 38 (Public information) contained in document A/49/6 (Prog. 8) and (Prog. 38) should do so in writing by Tuesday, 25 October, for transmission to the Fifth Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.